



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Report on the 2006 OSCE-Thailand Conference

As delivered by Ambassador Julie Finley
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 8, 2006

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States would like to thank the Royal Government of Thailand, as well as the OSCE Secretariat, for their work in organizing this conference.

I must say I found it absolutely fascinating. The reports, the interventions on the part of some of the people who are sitting around here at this table now, as well as some of the invited speakers, were extremely helpful in giving a sometimes very different perspective than one gets from matters here in Vienna.

I must give an award to the Royal Thai Government for exhibiting, in my opinion, the height of tolerance by having invited and allowed to come Burma. It was a lesson in tolerance for even me. They were not observers they actually spoke. It struck me as frankly weird that a repressive government like that would even contemplate sending a delegation to a conference sponsored by an organization like the OSCE, which bases its values on human rights and democratic standards. But one could only hope, as I did there, that somehow by osmosis something might penetrate the very evil skulls that were around the table.

The reports from representatives, like the one from Vietnam, were wonderful, not too long, of moderate length, so they were helpful and not boring. So all in all I think Thailand did do a very fine job. And I think it underlines for the United States the importance of having such conferences in different capitals and for different reasons. Of course in this case this was a partner of the OSCE and its capital. But this is very, very helpful and I hope that more of us are able to attend such partnership conferences.

As noted in the conference report, participants highlighted a number of areas for potential cooperation, including combating trafficking in persons, fighting organized crime and corruption and addressing issues of migration and integration.

Emphasis should indeed now be placed on ensuring concrete and very solid follow-up to all that came out of that conference.

We, the United States, value the cooperation very much with our Asian and Mediterranean Partners. As I mentioned in Thailand, we will be missing a great opportunity if a strengthened relationship fails to become a reality.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.